

Marvellous MUSHROOMS

They are nutritious, they are versatile, and here's how to make the most of them

STORY AND PHOTOS • CHARMIAN CHRISTIE



Charmian Christie

If I were to describe mushrooms in one word, it would be a toss up between “miraculous” and “misunderstood.”

Miraculous because they are the only product in the produce aisle with vitamin D. They contain this naturally, but levels ramp up when exposed to UV light — just like the humans that consume them. Vitamin D is only one of the 15 nutrients they deliver. The best part? Whole or sliced, cooked or raw, mushrooms maintain their nutritional profile.

While their nutrients are stable, some mushrooms themselves are shape-shifters. Criminis, which are harvested at two to three days, double in size every 24 hours. By day five or six the once small crimini has grown into a full-fledged portabella, which explains why criminis are sometimes marketed as “baby bellas”. Despite rapid growth and year-round harvesting, mushrooms require no chemicals or pesticides to thrive.

Yet for all their marvels, mushrooms are victim to many misconceptions.

Contrary to popular belief, they don't need to be kept in the dark. They thrive in any light condition. After all, the humans who grow and pick them need a well-lit operation to see what they're doing. And no, mushrooms don't grow in manure. The familiar white, crimini and portabella varieties are grown in bacteria-free peat moss, while shiitakes grow on logs, and Enoki grow in saw dust.

BUYING AND STORING

Regardless of the variety, mushrooms should be firm with a uniform colour. Packaged mushrooms will keep in the fridge for a week if left unopened. Once the seal is broken, transfer the mushrooms to a paper bag to keep them from releasing moisture and getting slimy.

If they dry out in the paper bag, place a damp paper towel in the bag and they'll absorb the moisture. Even shrivelled mushrooms can be rehydrated with water.

TO WASH OR NOT TO WASH

All packaged mushrooms have been pre-washed, so there's no need to wash or peel them. Any soil on them can be brushed off. However, if you buy from the farmers' market or from a bulk setup where other shoppers might have touched them, just before using, give your mushrooms a quick rinse and wipe with a paper towel. Never soak fresh mushrooms as they will get waterlogged — and they're already 90 per cent water.

TAKE YOUR PICK

White Button: The button mushroom comes in small, medium and large. Regardless of size, it has a mild flavour that develops when cooked. The go-to of the mushroom family, white buttons are the most popular-selling mushroom in Canada. Serve them stuffed as one-bite appetizers, purée them into soups

or toss them into stir-fries.

Crimini: Also called brown mushrooms, criminis look like their white button counterpart, but are darker and firmer. While they're meatier than white buttons, these are just as versatile, making a wonderful addition to pizza, stews, casseroles and soups.

Portabella: Coveted for their umbrella-like caps, portabella mushrooms are very meaty with an earthy taste. Whole caps can be grilled as “burgers,” but you can also chop them into small pieces and use them anywhere button or crimini are called for.

Enoki: Tall and slender, mild and crunchy, these are the bean sprouts of mushrooms. They make a welcomed addition to salads and wraps. Just trim off the roots, then enjoy them from stem to cap. While not recommended for cooking, you can toss them in a stir-fry at the last minute.

Oyster: Crooked stems and funnel-shaped caps make the oyster mushroom stand out. They're good raw in salads, but once cooked become creamy and velvety, making them ideal for cream sauces.

King oyster: Towering above the other mushrooms, these tall mushrooms have a light brown caps and thick white stems. They're sweet and chewy. Because they stay firm when cooked, their thick stems are often sliced into rings and used as a vegetarian replacement for scallops.

Shiitake: Their bold, earthy flavour works well with most Asian cuisines. The caps have a spongy texture. Remove the woody stems before cooking and use them to make soup stock.



THAI COCONUT & MUSHROOM SOUP

This is my version of the classic Thai soup Tom Kha Gai. One trip to the Asian grocers will provide you with enough lemongrass, chilies, galangal and lime leaves for several batches (all these freeze nicely), but you can make this soup with less exotic ingredients if you want to try this bright, warm soup right away.

- 4 stalks** lemongrass (or 2 teaspoons lemon zest)
- 2 red** chilies (Thai bird's-eye chilies are best) (more for optional garnish)
- 2 cans** (400 ml each) coconut milk
- 2 cups** (500 ml) chicken stock
- 1 two-inch** piece galangal or fresh ginger root, sliced in 1/4 inch rounds
- 4 lime** leaves, torn (optional)
- 12 ounces** (340 grams) boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut in thin strips
- 8 ounces** (226 grams) mushrooms (shiitake work well), cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1/4 cup** (60 ml) fresh lime juice
- 1 tablespoon** (15 ml) fish sauce
- Finely chopped** fresh cilantro, for garnish

- 1.** Trim the roots and tough green tops from the lemongrass stalks, leaving a good four-inch bulb. Peel off the tough outer leaves, then smash the bulbs with the flat of a chef's knife or a mallet. Set aside.
- 2.** Heat a heavy saucepan until hot. Add the chilies and cook until they begin to brown. Add the coconut milk, chicken stock, galangal, lime leaves and smashed lemongrass. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer for 10 minutes to allow flavours to infuse.
- 3.** Using a slotted spoon, remove the spices from the broth. Add the chicken and mushrooms. Simmer for five to eight minutes, or until the chicken is cooked and the mushrooms are tender.
- 4.** Stir in the lime juice and fish sauce. Ladle into bowls. Garnish with chopped cilantro. If you like extra heat, add a couple of sliced red chilies. Serve immediately.

Serves 6



ARVANITIS & ASSOCIATES

DENTISTRY BY DESIGN



Excellence in Aesthetic & Implant Dentistry

George Arvanitis, D.D.S.
Dental Surgeon



Attention Denture Wearers & Those About to Lose their Teeth!
Dr. Arvanitis has developed a Revolutionary New Technique for Teeth in a Day

Imagine having all your teeth replaced with an implant supported non-removable bridge in one appointment! What's Revolutionary?

The **Procedure**, the **Time** it takes and the **Price**.

If you have lost all your teeth or are about to, then Dr. Arvanitis wants to help you eat and smile with confidence, with the best implant treatment at an unbelievable price!

Call now to book your free consultation!

519-748-2282

55 Bridgeport Road East, Waterloo, Ontario

Smile Now Pay Later... Ask Us How with the Arvanitis Dental Credit Card

Hours: Monday and Tuesday 8 am - 8 pm
 Wednesday and Thursday 8 am - 6 pm • Friday 8 am - 3:30 pm

www.kw-implants.com



MICRONEEDLING

Plumping of fine lines and wrinkles
 Tightening of the skin
 Reduction of acne scars and stretch marks

PROMO:
BUY 2 TREATMENTS GET MEDICAL PEEL FREE.
(Offer expires April 28, 2017)



BEFORE AFTER

www.JolantasSpa.com | 519.725.9999
 646 Erb Street West, Unit 105, Waterloo



MUSHROOM DUTCH BABY

If a popover and a pancake got together for a romantic tryst, the result would be a bouncing Dutch baby. Like a popover, it emerges from the oven puffed and light, but quickly reverts to its pancake heritage once the topping arrives. You can mix and match mushrooms, or use one kind. Try a mix of button, crimini, and portabella. King oysters are also a wonderful addition.

Batter

- 3 large eggs**
- 1 cup milk**
- 2 tablespoons** melted butter, plus 1 tablespoon for the hot skillet
- 3/4 cup** all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup** cornstarch
- 1/2 teaspoon** sea salt

Mushroom topping

- 2 tablespoons** butter
- 1 clove** garlic,
- 3 sprigs** thyme, leaves stripped from the stem
- 1 pound** mushrooms, sliced
- 1/4 teaspoon** fine sea salt
- 4 ounces** smoked Gouda, grated
- Fresh ground** pepper

Instructions

- 1.** Centre a rack in the oven. Place a heavy 10-inch ovenproof skillet on the rack to heat. Preheat oven to 425°F and heat the pan for at least 30 minutes.
- 2.** As the oven heats, make the batter by whisking the eggs, milk, and butter in a medium bowl. Add the flour, cornstarch, and salt. Whisk until smooth. Set aside.
- 3.** For the mushroom filling, melt the butter in a second large skillet over medium heat. When it bubbles, add the garlic and

thyme, and cook one minute. Add the mushrooms, and salt. Increase heat to medium-high. If using a mix of mushrooms, add the large, meaty mushrooms first and allow them to cook a bit before adding the small, more tender mushrooms. Cook, stirring often, until the mushrooms are tender. Set aside.

4. Remove the hot skillet from the oven. Working quickly, drop one tablespoon butter in the pan, and tilt to coat. Pour the batter into the pan and return the skillet to the oven. Bake for 20 minutes or until puffed and golden brown. About five minutes before the Dutch baby is done, rewarm the sautéed mushrooms.

5. Remove skillet from oven, sprinkle the Dutch baby with the grated Gouda, then top with the hot mushrooms and a grinding of fresh black pepper. Slice and serve immediately.

Serves 4 to 6 

Stemmler's
est. 1985



Steak & Stout Pie

Serves 4-6 People (20 min prep time plus 3 hrs cook time)

(Ingredients)

- 1 Large Sweet Onion (Diced)
- 2 Cloves Garlic (Minced)
- 3 Carrots (Diced)
- 3 Celery Stalks (Chopped)
- 10 Mushrooms (Quartered)
- 1 lb. "Locally Sourced" Striploin Steak from Stemmler
- 1/4 Cup Butter
- 1/8 Cup Olive Oil
- 1 Tbsp Tomato Paste
- 2 Sprigs Fresh Thyme
- 2 Sprigs Fresh Rosemary
- 2 Bay leaves
- 1 Can "Locally Sourced" Stout Beer
- 1/2 Cup Stemmler's Smokin Good Sauce (Stemmler's Smoked in House Cheddar)
- 1 Cup Stemmler's Store Made Beef Stock
- 1/4 Cup Flour
- 1/2 Cup Shredded Smoked Cheddar (Stemmler's Smoked in House Cheddar)
- 2 pkgs Frozen Puff Pastry (Thawed)
- 1/2 Cup Frozen Peas
- 1 Egg (Beaten for an Egg Wash)



CHEF SCOTT YATES

Instructions:

- 1.** Season the steaks with salt/pepper and your favorite spices. In a hot pan, melt the butter then add the steaks. Sear for 2 minutes each side until it has a nice crust. Remove and set aside to cool down. In the same pan add the oil then add the onions, celery and carrots. Cook 3-4 minutes then add mushrooms, garlic & tomato paste for 2 more minutes then the flour as well as some seasoning (as you did for the steaks). After about 7 minutes total, pour everything into a roasting pan.
- 2.** When the steaks are cooled down, cut into a medium dice and add to the vegetables. Toss in the fresh herbs and bay leaves. In the previous pan, add 1 can of beer, smoking sauce and the stock. Bring to a simmer then dump into the veg and beef mixture. Liquid should just cover it. Foil tightly then place in oven for 1 1/2 hours.
- 3.** At this time, pull from oven and stir, also checking the tenderness of the beef and thickness of the sauce. If it's liquidy, place back in the oven uncovered for another 1/2 hour to reduce and thicken. Lay the thawed pastry sheets out. Place one in the bottom of the pan/pie plate. Egg wash the sheet before adding the second one, the opposite way. Keep in fridge until the beef mixture is cooled slightly then scoop it into the pastry (don't let it be too liquidy) Add the peas and the cheese, remove the bay leaves and lay another 2 sheets of pastry to the top (the same way you did the bottom). Roll the overhanging edges up around the entire pie. Egg wash this as well.
- 4.** In a preheated 400F oven, bake the pie until the pastry is golden brown and has puffed up (usually about 25-30 minutes). Keep checking until it looks done. The bottom has to cook as well. Once the colour is there, pull it out. Let rest for 10-15 minutes then dig in and enjoy our twist on a classic Irish comfort food!!

For more information on Chef Scott Yates please visit : chefscottcooks.com

3031 Lobsinger Line Heidelberg Ontario, N0B 2M1 Tel: (519) 699-4590

w w w . s t e m m l e r m e a t s . c a